

To the Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen of the CT General Assembly:

This bill is of great concern to me and the bagpiping community. This bill would grant the State the ability to seize our historical, ivory instruments for not following the current, and the potentially overreaching bureaucratic requirements created by this bill.

I own an historical set of bagpipes with ivory. In accordance with international treaty, I traveled to Switzerland in 2011 with my band the Manchester Regional Police & Fire Pipeband, and all that I needed was a notarized affidavit detailing their origin as being pre-CITES. CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention) is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.

CITES provides two exemptions that apply to bagpipes, that they were manufactured pre-1975-76, and that they are for non-commercial purposes (i.e. cultural-educational performance):

Reference for 3 & 4: <https://www.fws.gov/le/pdf/CITES-and-Elephant-Conservation.pdf>

3. It only applies to ivory acquired after elephants were listed under CITES. Ivory acquired prior to the species being listed under CITES (July 1, 1975 for Asian elephants and February 2, 1976 for African elephants) is considered pre- Convention. With proper CITES documentation, pre-Convention ivory can be imported, exported, or re-exported, unless stricter domestic laws prohibit such actions. (Note: In the U.S., the ESA and AfECA provide for stricter regulation on import, export, and re-export.)

4. Exceptions can be granted for non-commercial purposes, such as science or education. With proper CITES documentation, trade can be allowed as long as its purpose is not primarily commercial.

This bill has restrictions such as “(C) such beneficiary or heir obtains a certificate of possession from the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection not later than one hundred eighty days after receipt of such specimen.” Our heirs shouldn’t have to file more state bureaucratic forms for items that should also be exempt at the State level being pre-CITES items. This proposed law restrains the trade of pre-CITES instruments, that shouldn’t be the case. I should be able to trade my historical ivory bagpipes with a well-known bagpipe preservationist in Canada, for a set of ivory-silver bagpipes should I so choose.

The international climate has changed as well. Our band plans to travel to Switzerland again this summer to perform once again in the Basel International Tattoo. This year I will represent US bagpiping with a plastic bagpipe without ivory. I bought a new second set of bagpipes. The CITES treaty was modified in February 2015, requiring forms and permits now before traveling; my affidavit isn’t enough now.

Even with the hassle of proper permits, they aren’t a guarantee that the law will be applied properly as the US Fish and Wildlife staff aren’t properly trained. Last year I read a story about a piper who had his historic bagpipes seized after piping in Canada. The kid eventually had them returned, but not without some political pressure. I won’t risk seizure of my bagpipes by these

yahoos who either overzealously know how to abuse authority, or through ignorance, seize historic property not knowing what they are doing.

I've seen the governmental ivory seizure of new ivory on the news. They burn the stuff. I don't want to see historic bagpipes burned by militant Fish & Wildlife agents or radicalized animal preservationists.

Please include the CITES exemptions in the proposed bill. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Robert B. Carrara
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